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Imagine That!

The University of Montana - Missoula

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March 11, 1996

UM RESEARCHER MONITORS POLLUTION WITH HONEY BEES

MISSOULA--

Imagine honey bees sounding the alarm on environmental pollution. Entomologist Jerry Bromenshenk, a biological sciences professor at The University of Montana—Missoula, has discovered that monitoring bees is one of the most efficient ways to sample the environment for hazards.

Like a canary in a coal mine, bees can warn of environmental hazards before humans can detect them, the research professor said. The Environmental Protection Agency has approved the insects for assessing hazards at waste sites.

"We've found out that because bees have fuzzy bodies, little branched hairs and electrostatic charges, they're actually little electrostatic flying dust mops," said Bromenshenk, whose "bee alert" system is in the Smithsonian Institution's permanent collection.

To find out more about bees and their benefits to environmental studies, tune in to Imagine That! Sunday, March 17, at 9 p.m. on KUFM/KGPR and Monday, March 18, at 7:33 a.m. on KEMC and at 6:28 p.m. on KGLT. Imagine That! is produced jointly by UM and Montana State University-Bozeman.

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